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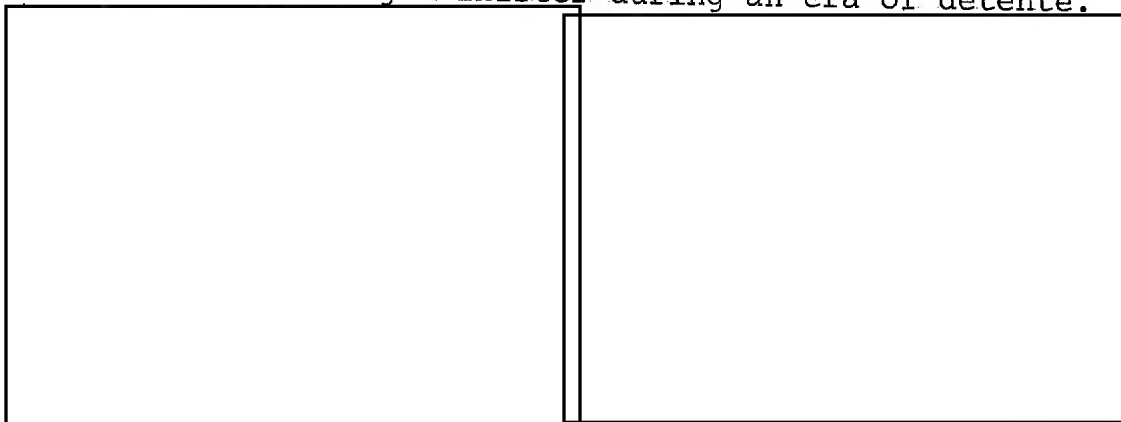
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EAST GERMANY

Possibilities for Foreign Minister

The US Mission in Berlin considers acting Foreign Minister Oskar Fischer to be the most likely successor to ailing Foreign Minister Otto Winzer, who seems to be permanently confined to his bed. Personable and highly regarded by party boss Honecker, Fischer has also become the favorite of the GDR Foreign Service Corps. Peter Florin, long regarded as the Crown Prince of the Ministry, is expected to remain in his post as ambassador to the UN. Two other candidates cited by the Mission are Paul Markowski, head of the central committee's international relations department, and Hermann Axen, a politburo member who specializes in foreign policy. The little known Markowski is influential but has had little diplomatic experience. The highly intelligent and tireless functionary Axen is generally regarded as "the principal architect of GDR foreign policy. On the other hand, many of his colleagues consider him to have an arrogant, personally irritating manner as well as a generally hard-line political approach, both of which make him less than an ideal Foreign Minister during an era of detente.

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State Dept. review completed